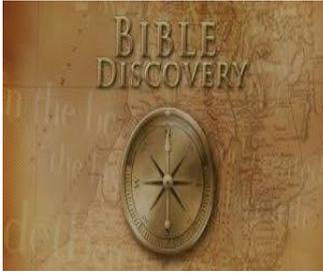


Yahweh Calls Ye Must Be Born Again



I'm fascinated with stories people tell of how they've been "*born again*". Each conversion and salvation story's unique, the story of how our Sovereign Lord, the Creator of all of heaven and earth, chooses to meet us at the crossroad of despair and hope, and reaches His hand down wooing all men and women, boys and girls, until they each perceive the presence of this great God, understand who He is, and comprehend what His personal plan is for each and every life; ***until they meet Yahweh!***

Our Heavenly Father does have a plan - a specific, personalized plan for each person He brings into the world so that includes each of you, and me. Yet many spend their entire lives avoiding Him, often from a position of distrust fearing that He is hell-bent on destroying them. "Modernity" says they cannot believe in a supernatural god – they search for natural explanations in their own efforts and strength, through their own understanding. But the Gospel is not a call to our repentance, to make restitution for past sins, to promise to do better in the future – ***no*** - while each is good in their proper place, ***it is not the Gospel*** – the Gospel is not good advice to be obeyed, it's ***Good News*** to be believed! Despite our hesitancy, our gracious God continues to woo us through experience after experience after experience - until finally our hearts realize indeed ***GOD is the answer to everything*** - everything yearned, everything hoped for - the only One able to fill that God-shaped void that exists – waiting - within the heart of every one of us.

**Our Heavenly
Father has a
specific,
personalized plan
for you and me!**

An unsaved man once said to me, "That born again stuff makes no sense to me." Perhaps you feel the same. As followers of Christ, to be born again is to undergo a "*spiritual rebirth*" or regeneration of the human soul through the inward working of the Holy Spirit, contrasted with the physical birth all naturally experience. The origin of the term "*born again*" comes from our Lord Jesus who said, "*...Unless a person is born from above, it's not possible to see what I'm pointing to—to God's kingdom.*" [vs. 3 *The Message*]

**Call for
personal
relationship
with Jesus
Christ!**

It speaks to **having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ**. It's an experience where everything they've been taught as Christians becomes real, and **they develop a direct and personal relationship with God.**

It is about really understanding what you have received from your Heavenly Father. In 1990, in Ottawa, a 24 year old of the name Curtis, walks into a bank and pulls a gun robbing them of \$6,000. He's subsequently caught and receives a sentence of 8 years for the robbery. The irony is that he took the gun from his parent's home. It turns out that was no ordinary gun. It was a .45-caliber Colt semi-automatic made by the Ross Rifle Company back in 1918.

This limited edition antique firearm was valued at \$100,000, more than 16 times the value of the stolen money. Do you understand what God has for you? Have you committed yourself to the One who has more than all you could ever need? It has been said that the man who has God and everything else has no more than the man who has God and nothing. What about you, have you received spiritual birth?

Chuck Colson, once known for his role in the Watergate affair back in the 1970's spoke of being born again as he described his path to faith in conjunction with his subsequent imprisonment; he writes that his spiritual experience followed considerable struggle and hesitancy for a "*personal encounter with God.*" He recalls, "*while I sat alone, words I had not been certain I could understand or say fell from my lips: "Lord Jesus, I believe in sureness of mind that matched the depth of feeling in my heart. There came something more: strength and serenity, a wonderful new assurance about life, a fresh perception of myself in the world around me."*

**Everyone requires
2 births – physical
& Spiritual!**

The traditional Jewish understanding of the promise of salvation is understood through "the seed of Abraham"; that is in the physical lineage of Abraham. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that this doctrine was erroneous — that **every** person requires two births—the *natural* birth of the physical body, the other of the water and the spirit. This revelation from Yahweh Himself establishes that all human beings must be "*born again*" of the spiritual seed of Christ if they are to have eternity with Him. Jesus speaks to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who says that, because of His miracles, Jesus is known "*to be a teacher who has come from God*". Not trapped by flattery, Jesus immediately replies: "*I tell you the truth; no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.*" A few verses later Jesus tells Nicodemus further: "*I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit*" and then explains, "*you should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*"

So what does "**born again**" mean for you and for me? In John's Gospel, the Greek word translated as *again* is "**anōthen**", meaning either "*again*", or "*from above*". Many Bible translations prefer "*from above*" and the remainder all give it as an alternative in marginal notes. Many argue, I think with merit, that this interpretation parallels such phrases as "*birth of the Spirit*" (v.5), and "*birth from God*" [John 1:12-13] which carries with it an emphasis upon the newness of the life given by God Himself.

Scripture's use of terms such as new birth, resurrection, new life, new creation, dying to sin and living to righteousness all constitute the offer of **our Heavenly Father's grace** for you and me. I believe Jesus uses the "birth" analogy to trace the spiritual newness of life to a new divine beginning. Why does a person need to be born spiritually? What is a "spiritual" birth? Man's spirit is dead in sin when we're born; i.e. we're born **void of God** because of our inherited sin nature from Adam. Our spirit is dead as the Bible says... "*You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of the world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*" [Ephesians 2:1-2] To be "spiritually" born means that God's Holy Spirit makes us alive. When a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus as the Christ—trusting Him alone to forgive all sins — then *God the Father* and *God the Son* come into that sinner's heart in the form of *God the Holy Spirit* [John 14:23]. The "Holy Spirit" is "God within us."

Therefore the key for requiring "spiritual" rebirth is that you've never been spiritually born to begin with. The Bible speaks of being "born again," actually meaning being "**born for the second time**" — from God. You're born physically into this world, but born spiritually dead —God created you, but gave you freewill to decide where you'll spend eternity.

This is important, in fact essential, for you and me if we're to truly appreciate our changed state with God through spiritual birth into this new life. First, to recognize more than personal improvement is needed — a new destiny requires a new origin, that the new origin must be from God, **and** the source of that new origin comes only through an awakening into new life in Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Secondly, we recognize spiritual rebirth is necessary for salvation because it marks the move toward holiness. This holiness comes only with faith **and** humility. Jesus on another occasion called a little child and instructed, "*Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*" [Matthew 18:2] Andrew Murray has succinctly explained it this way, "Here is the path to the higher life: **down, lower down!** Just as water always seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds men abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless." God does His best work in us when we humble ourselves submitting to Him, realizing we've nothing to bring but **surrender**, allowing Him to have His way in our hearts. We're given new life in Him — a new heart. We're made holy because He is holy, and we're equipped through His Holy Spirit to live in fullness of life in Yahweh — *raised* with Jesus the Messiah.

**New destiny requires
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The idea of "*rebirth in Christ*" has inspired our brothers and sisters throughout the generations to live lives worthy of the calling. We see in the disciples men who, though having run away at Jesus' arrest are ready to die for their faith. We see men like Stephen not only standing ready to die, but able to forgive and ask our Heavenly Father to not hold their actions against them as they throw the stones which end his life. This mirrors the action of Christ who forgave from the agony of the cross.

***If you're born
once, you die
twice; if you're
born twice,
then you die
ONCE!***

So it is that Yahweh calls saying ***ye must be born again***. Are you among those who have answered the call? We are assured as with Nicodemus that there is only one way to the Father and that is through the Spirit. Jesus tells us, "*I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*" (v. 5) I leave you then with this question –have you been born again? Most people have religion, but very few people have ever been Biblically born-again. Unless you are born again, you absolutely cannot go to Heaven. We are born again by the Word of God. Jesus is the Word of God. The following statement sums it up pretty good... "***If you're born once, then you die TWICE; if you're born twice, then you die ONCE***".

How you answer this question this morning will make a difference in your life — for all eternity! Perhaps you're still in the camp with the man I mentioned earlier, "That born again stuff makes no sense to me." Well, most people can't explain how a black cow can eat green grass, give white milk, and then it's turned into yellow butter—but they still eat it! My friend, you don't have to figure everything out to be saved, you just need to trust upon Jesus, the Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Or perhaps this morning you have come in still chasing after the \$6,000 from the bank while never realizing that the invaluable gift of your Heavenly Father is yours if you would but receive it.

My friend, if you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God Who died, was buried and rose again for your sins, ascended into heaven sitting with the Father and that He will come again, and you've made that your hope for Heaven by believing on His name, then you are a born-again child of God.

Today is your only guaranteed opportunity to meet the Saviour. This is your chance to discover the love of a wonderful Lord and start a personal relationship with the God of the Universe – for today, for tomorrow and for all eternity!

